

16 July 2001

The Honorable Gary Schiff, Chair  
Zoning and Planning Committee  
Minneapolis City Council  
Room 307 City Hall  
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1383

RE: Environmental Review Process for the Abbott Northwestern Hospital Campus Expansion Project

Dear Council Member Schiff:

On May 27, 2001 the City released an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) covering the anticipated environmental impacts of the Abbott Northwestern Hospital Campus Expansion Project.

Accompanying this letter is the draft "Findings of Fact and Record of Decision" for this EAW. The primary purpose of the report is to consider all of the issues in the environmental review and conclude whether or not an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is needed. It includes the comments received and responses to the substantive issues raised in these comments.

The next and final step in the EAW process is for the City to determine if an EIS is necessary. This is called a Final Declaration Decision and Minnesota law restricts the City to the following options:

1. **Positive Declaration:** An EIS is required.
2. **Negative Declaration:** No EIS is necessary.
3. **Need for Additional Information:** Additional information is reasonably available and needed to make a Final Declaration. Decision is postponed up to 30 days.

The Planning Department, with the consultation of the City Attorney's Office, and all appropriate City staff, concludes the following:

1. The EAW and related documentation were prepared in compliance with the procedures of the Minnesota Environmental Policy Act and Minn. Rules, Parts 4410.1000 to 4410.1700 (1993).
2. The EAW and related documentation have satisfactorily addressed all of the issues for which existing information could have been reasonably obtained.
3. The project does not have the potential for significant environmental effects.
4. Consequently, the EAW is adequate and that the City should not require the development of an EIS for the project.

**Staff Recommendation:**

1. That the City Council not order the development of an EIS and, therefore, make a Negative Declaration.
2. That the City Council adopt the "Findings of Fact and Record of Decision" report.

Should you have any questions, please contact Kimberly Tollefson of my staff at 673.2998.

Sincerely,

Charles Ballentine  
Planning Director

Attachment: draft "Findings of Fact and Record of Decision"

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